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CEREBUS

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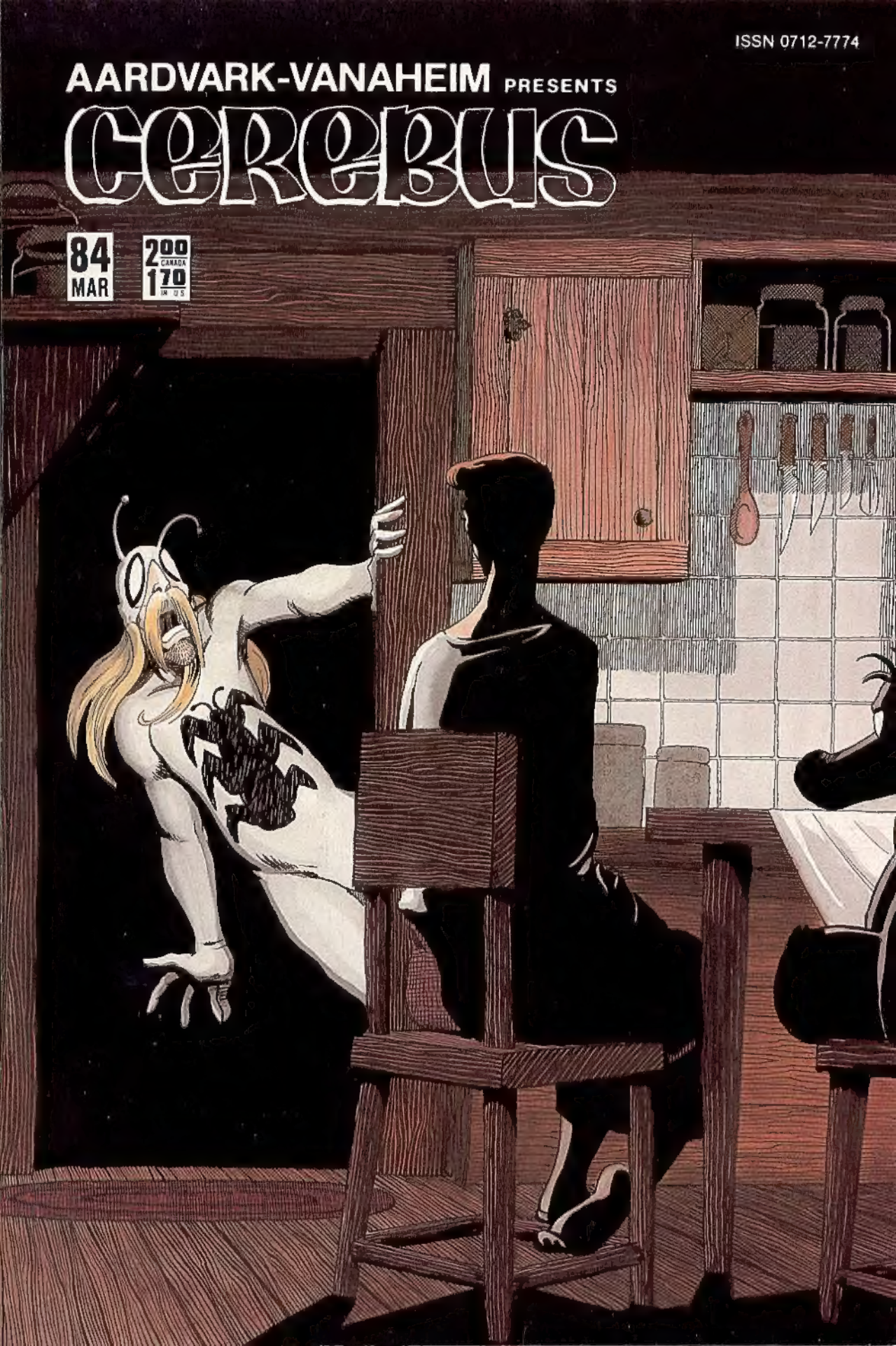

N O T E • F R O M • T H E P R E S I D E N T

Back from Florida.

Spending a lot of time by myself. Strongly recommend Robertson Davies' "Papers of Samuel Marchbanks" (or any Davies fiction for those so-deprived).

Write soon and let me know how you're getting on.

Our back cover: Gerhard, Gerhard's camera, Ewik's flash (hi, Ewik), and me at our first con in 1986. Suncon in Tampa, Florida. Lovely con, just lovely. Photo by our old friend Bill Hatfield.

PERSONAL APPEARANCES

MARCH 28, 29, 30
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CEREBUS

NO. 84 MARCH 1986

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CHARIOT of the QUEEN, CHARIOT of the LOVERS

DINNER! HOW STRANGE IT SEEMS TO EVEN THINK OF FOOD AS THE SACRED WARS RAGE ALL AROUND US, CAUSING ME TO REMEMBER WHEN I WASN'T THE SACRED WARS ROACH, BEFORE MY NEW BLACK COSTUME....
BUT, I MUST FORGET ALL THAT, BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS DIFFERENT NOW
AGIN FLEAGLE ROACH SEEKS TUH BETH' ONE TUHST NEXT TUHOUR BOSSMAN TH' SACRED WARS ROACH, CAUSIN' A RIFT ATWEEN HIM 'N' ME..
SMAK
AGIN DREW ROACH FERGITS THET AH WUZ TH' FARST ALLY O' TH' SACRED WARS ROACH N' THEREFORE TH' ON'Y ONE ALLOWED T' EAT 'IS LEFTOVERS IF 'N THAR ARE ENNY
PUNCH
MM. ONCE MORE I'M FORCED TO CLEAR MY THROAT...
AHEM
TH' SECRET SACRED WARS ROACH SECRET THROAT-CLEARIN' NOISE SIGNALLIN' THET OUR BOSSMAN THE SACRED WARS ROACH HAS SOMETHIN' T' SAY...
IT SEEMS HARD TUH BELIEVE THET AS SOON AS WE STOP JAWIN' AT EACH OTHER THET HE'LL TELL US SOMETHIN'...
NOT MUCH TIME! MUST CHOOSE! MUST DECIDE! NOW!
...
DREW ROACH.

A SURPRAZIN' TARN IN TH' SACRED WARS'N' ONE WHICH BODES WELL FER TH' FORCES O' GOODNESS 'N' ORDER...
AH CAIN'T HELP BUT SENSE THET A MAJOR MISTAKE HAS BIN MADE 'N' THET WE SHALL ALL PAY FER IT SOONER 'N WE THANK ...
TOP SECRET SACRED WARS CREAM RISES TO THE TOP AND EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST WATERY MILK SURPRISE TRAINING THING --FIRST ONE TO THE KITCHEN GETS DOUBLE SACRED WARS RATIONS GO!...

PUNCH
KICK
BAF
BASH

AH WON! SARVE UP DOUBLE RATIONS O' EVER'THIN', COUN'ESS AHM HONGRY ENUFF TUH...
WHOA...
BAF!
PUNCH
KRAK
COUN'ESS! PUT MUH LUCKY SPOON 'N' MUH BUNNY CUP NEXT TUH THE SACRED WARS ROACH--AHM FIXIN' TUH...
HEY!
POW
KRAK
BUMP

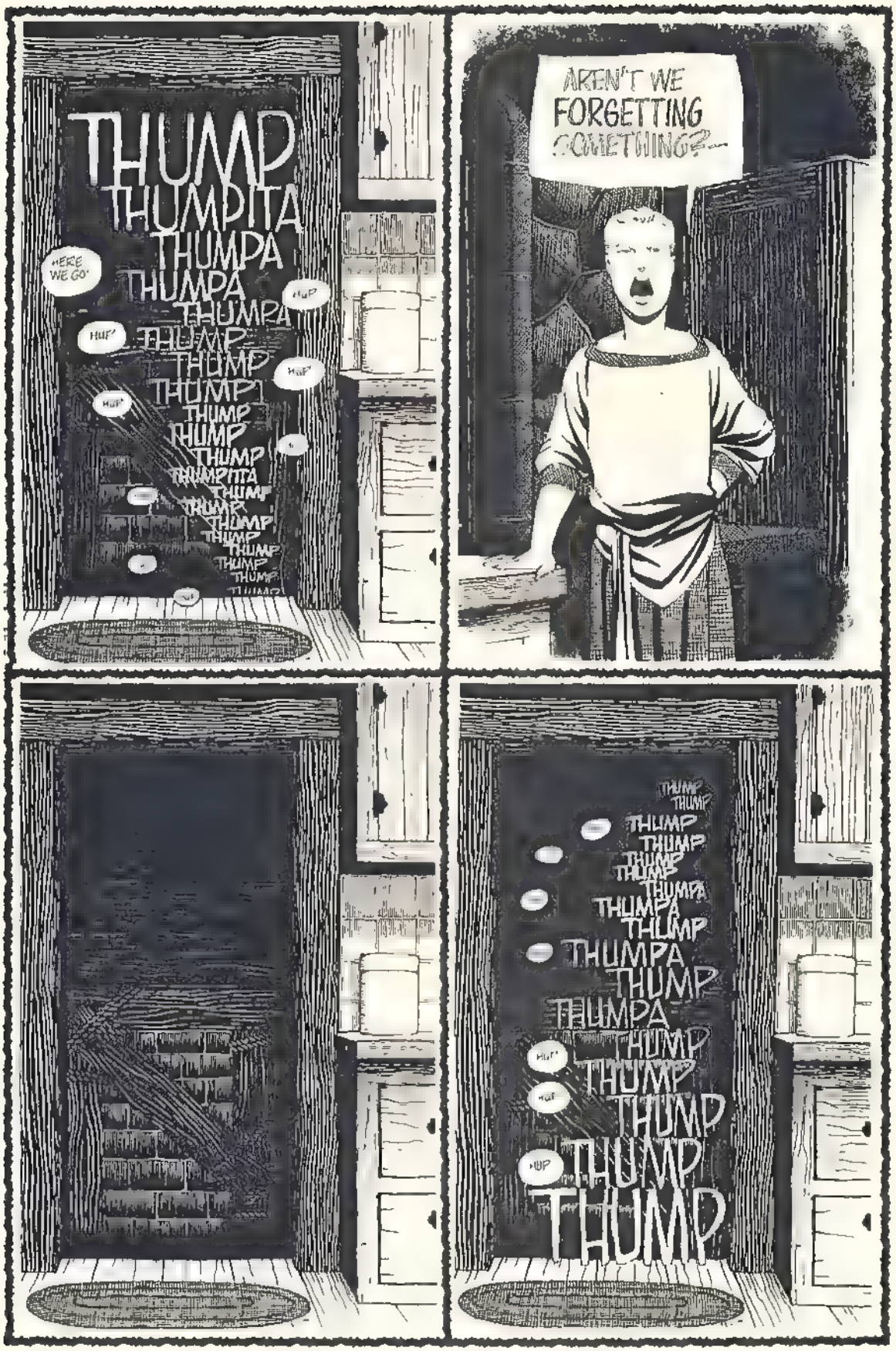
LEGGO, DREW ROACH--AHM GITTIN' TH' DOUBLE RATIONS
PUNCH
OVER MAH DAID ANTENNEE FLEAGLE-ROACH!
CRAK
HAVE IT YER OWN WAY DREW ROACH!
SMAK
AHM COMIN' COUN'ESS!! KEEP THE SOUP
OUCHIE!
CRUNCH

ARE THEY ALWAYS LIKE THIS?
...
THIS?
THIS IS NOTHING -- YOU SHOULD SEE THEM WHEN IT'S TIME FOR THEM TO GET THEIR JAMMIES ON...
TH POK
TH POK
HEH HEH HEH
SORRY, COUNTESS -- I GUESS THEY GOT CARRIED AWAY...
RATTLE RATTLE
RATTLE RATTLE
MM.

HAVE A SEAT, BOYS.
TH-POCK
TH-POCK
AND NOW..... IT'S...TIME TO...
DIG IN!
GOBBLE
MUNCH
MUNCH
RRRIP
SLUP
CHOMP
WOLFA
WOLFA
CHEW
GULP
CHEW
GULP
CHEW

GULP
SLUP SLUP
SMACK G
ARTEMIS!
CHEW
SLUP
SMACK
CHEW
CHEW
SMA
RUNC
MLPSS?
MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
I GAVE YOU A KNIFE, FORK, SPOON AND A PLATE FOR A...
BELCH

...REASON
MWHA-?
NEVER MIND
IT SEEMS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT DINNER IS OVER AND THAT THE AFTER-DINNER PHASE OF THE SACRED WARS IS ABOUT TO BEGIN
BUT FIRST, IT'S TIME TO DESCEND INTO THE SECRET SACRED WARS ALLEYWAY AND TAKE A SECRET SACRED WARS LEAK
...AND CONSIDERING HOW LONG IT TAKES TO GET OUT OF THESE SECRET SACRED WARS COSTUMES, WE'D BETTER GET A SECRET SACRED WARS MOVE ON...
A NEW CRAWSIS IN TH' SECRET SACRED WARS FERMUHZIPPER IS RUSTED SHUT...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THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
"HERE WE GO"
HUH?
HUH?
HUH?
AREN'T WE FORGETTING SOMETHING?
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
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THUMP
THUMPA
THUMP
THUMPA
THUMP
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THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
HUH?
HUH?
HUH?

THAN. MICH
THANK YOU SHELLE
YK YOU NICHELLE
YOU'RE WELCOME
THUMP
HUP
HUP
THUMP THUMPA THUMPITA
HUP
THUMP THUMPA THUMP
HUP
THUMP
HUP
THUMPITA
THUMP
BEFORE HE DIED...
WEISSHAUPT GAVE ME SOMETHING FOR YOU

IT WAS ONE OF A NUMBER OF THINGS THAT HE WANTED PUT RIGHT
A FEW LAST LETTERS TO HIS FAMILY · THE SEA. NG OF HIS PERSONAL PAPERS
HE EVEN ASKED ME TO TAKE CARE OF ARTEMIS FOR A MONTH OR SO...
TAK NG CARE OF DETA LS HE WAS ALWAYS TAKING CARE OF DETA LS

AND ALSO- ALSO IT WAS HIS WAY TO CONTROL ME EVEN AFTER HIS DEATH.
TO GET ME TIED UP IN ALL OF HIS NONSENSE
I MISS HIM TERRIBLY...
BUT I DON'T MISS --OR ENVY-- THE LIFE HE LED, THE LIFE THAT KILLED HIM..

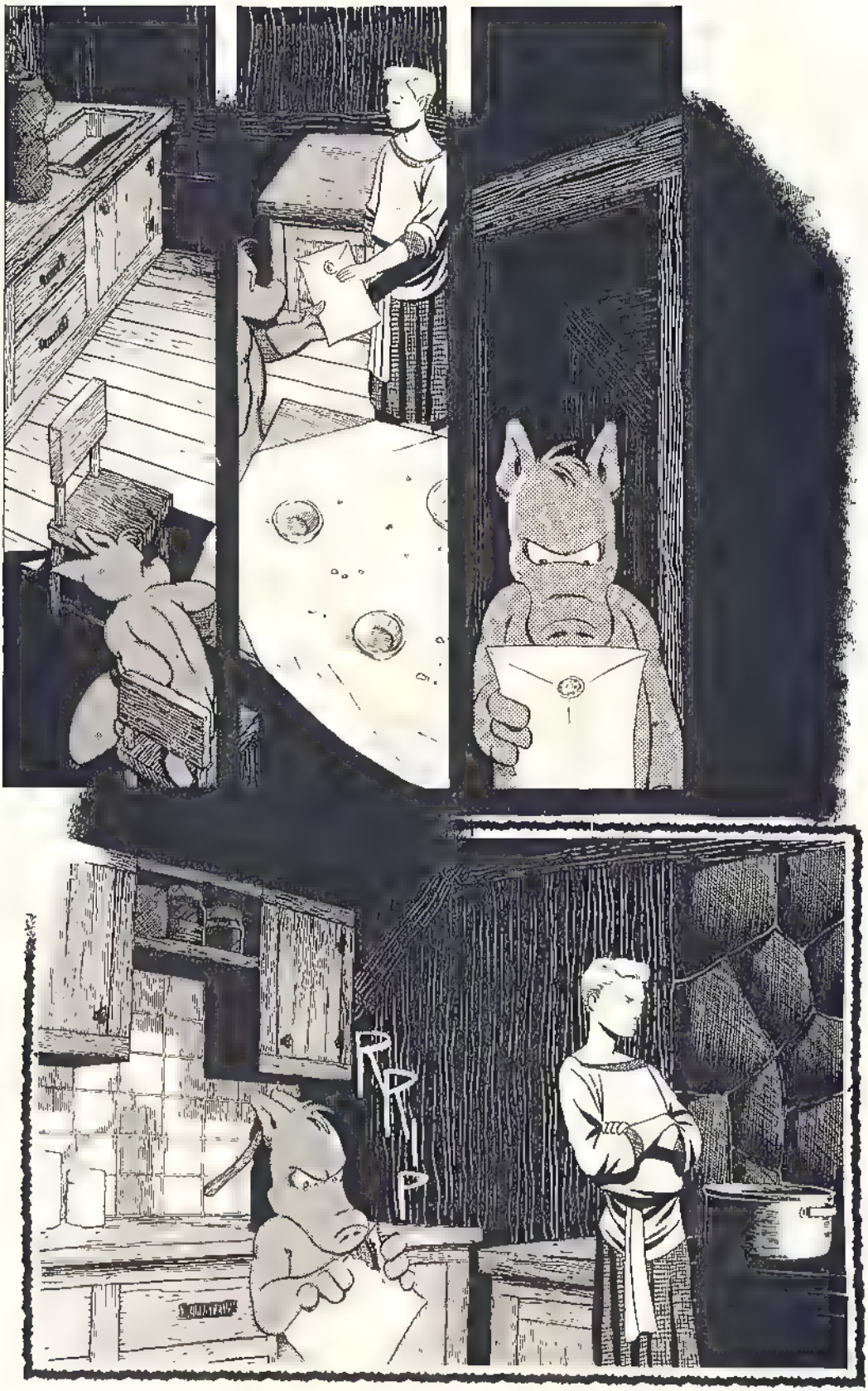
I WOULDN'T BE ANY PART OF IT WHILE HE WAS ALIVE...
AND I WON'T BE ANY PART OF IT NOW THAT HE'S GONE
HE SAID THAT ONCE YOU HAVE THE MISSING PIECE
ONCE YOU HAVE ...THIS...

THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RECOVER ALL YOU HAVE LOST
I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS A LAST FAVOUR FOR A DYING MAN..
A LAST FAVOUR FOR SOMEONE WHO HELPED ME. WHATEVER HIS REASONS MIGHT HAVE BEEN ..
HE SAID ONCE YOU REGAINED THE PAPACY YOU WILL CALL ON ME AND THAT I WILL STAND BESIDE YOU AT THE FINAL . WHATCHA MACALLIT..

WELL, I WON'T--DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
WHY WOULD WEISSHAUPT WANT TO HELP CEREBUS?
DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I JUST TOLD YOU?
AYE!
YOU WON'T BE AT THE FINAL WHATCHAMACALLIT

HE SAID IF HE DIED SOMEONE ELSE WOULD BE DECLARED TO BE TARIM ON EARTH
HE SAID IF THAT WAS TO BE THE CASE, HE WOULD WANT IT TO BE SOMEONE LIKE YOU ...SOMEONE ..
...MUNDANE.
SO HE WOULD STILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS POLITICAL REFORMS

TAKE T..
TAKE IT..
AND THEN PLEASE GO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BOOM
TARIM!
WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT
IT'S SNOWING
IN THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER

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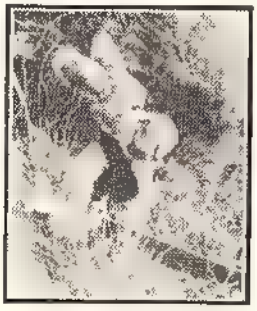

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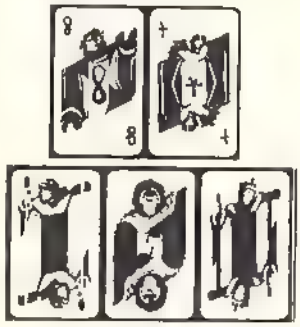

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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Dear Dave,
I don't know. I kind of enjoyed Cerebus #81. I mean there were some funny bits here and there -- but I couldn't say I liked it. Maybe my interest in Cerebus is starting to wane (I read the first four Swords rather quickly -- but I still haven't finished the fifth one), as I said, I don't know. I'm also getting kind of bored with trying to write clever letters, so I'm sure you'll be crushed to hear I probably won't be writing as much anymore. I'm not saying I'm dropping Cerebus, just that it may be on its way to boring me.
All the best,

Fred Averick
1730 East 18th Street,
Brooklyn, N.Y., 11229

I haven't printed any of Old Fred's letters since they've all affected the weary and jaded tone much evident in this one. I have no doubt that the composing of clever letters has been a considerable strain on Old Fred since it is something he does neither easily nor well.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
Now that Church and State is over, I am under the impression that people have no idea what happened. Not knowing myself, I read through it again, and came up with this.

Thousands of millenia ago, it was foreseen that a hitlerish sort of dude would come by, take over the world, and make a real mess. It was also foreseen that an Aardvark would be instrumental in stopping this dude. This was interpreted as Tarim would come back as an Aardvark, which made a whole lot of people start worshipping the Aardvarks. So, the popes, being the only people who could figure out how to stop Weisshaupt (the hitler dude), were all assassinated, thereby keeping the foreseen aardvark in the dark so W.H. could ascend to world domination. Of course, his plans are all foiled because one of the bishops managed to figure out that Cerebus should be the pope, the second coming and all that, given ultimate power, and get rid of Weisshaupt. Making Cerebus pope was like putting the proverbial bull in a microchip manufacturing factory, but he did do his job by temporarily destroying the economy of the Feldwar States and tearing down all of Weisshaupts works. Of course, the predictions said nothing about what would happen after he killed off Weisshaupt, but it seems that the Earth Pig has finally done something right, a genuine first in the poor dude's misbegotten life. What happens next is up to him.
Your fan,

Zonker Clark
317 Dayton Street,
Yellow Springs, OH., 45387

Aside from your misapprehension that "Church and State" is over, that's not a bad little synopsis you've got there.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,
The day that Cerebus #81 made its way into my home was also, strangely enough the same day that my supposed-fiancee left me. Now, I'm not one of those looney-tunes who rave about cosmic connections on street corners, but well, Dave, if there is some connection I'll find it, and if I do, I'll do your laundry for a week. Or buy you a drink. Whatever. "Sacred Wars" made me smile, Dave, and forget that life is usually 80% slime and 20% misery, so for that I'll buy two drinks.

In the numbered questions department:
(1)Why don't you show up at Bill Paul's anymore? You're almost a deity there.
(2)What's the best thing to do when a relationship falls apart?

Come to London someday, and we'll paint the town various shades of indigo.
Thanks,

Twist
290 Springbank Rd.
London, Ontario

(1)A deity? Really? How nice. Why don't you have someone tell me when the next LAFF is being held and I'll drop by and... grant boons or answer prayers or something.
(2)Do everything on the spur of the moment and relish the fact that you're not accountable to anyone. Be so unpredictable that even you don't know what you're going to do next.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave;
What can I say? Yeah, I know that's a stupid way to start a

letter. Obviously I'm going to find something to say. But I am still in a confused state of mind after reading your "Note from the President" in Cerebus #81. I was wondering when you would start to question your 300 issue deadline, and I would like to say right up front that I don't blame you for having second thoughts about your previous plans for this comic. I have always thought the idea of 300 monthly issues with the last one set to come out in March of 2003 was an unworkable one. It was just a silly notion by a young, inexperienced writer/artist, and I hope all Cerebus and Dave Sim fans will be able to accept that, eventually. It would be like George Orwell saying just before starting work on "1984" that "Oh, I'm going to make this book 250 pages,...no more, no less." It's not quantity but quality that counts. If you only need only 236 issues to tell all you want to tell about Cerebus, fine. If, on the other hand, you get to that magic number of 300 and find you need a few more issues, dandy. I don't think anybody would want you to continue just so you can get to issue 300. After all, we wouldn't want folks to say things about your work similar to what Edmund Waller (1606-1687) said about John Milton's "Paradise Lost": "If its length be not considered a merit, it hath no other." Besides, I've already encouraged you to drop "the three little letters" at the bottom of the "the little box on the front cover" of every CEREBUS issue. I would, needless to say, prefer to have my fix of the feisty aardvark once every month, but if you feel you need extra time between issues to keep the quality at a high level, then no one should object. We would all, though, like to be kept informed, I think. Your "Note" this month was rather elusive as to what your final decision (if any) might be on this entire matter. So what's the scoop, Cousin Ed?

Still yours,

Conrad P. Felber
P.O. Box 855
Terrace Bay, Ontario

Actually, Conrad, it's got to be just about as easy (if not easier) to finish the story-line in issue 300 as it is to finish each issue on page 20.

Besides, you're setting a bit of a trap for me with that "extra time to keep the quality at a high level". I daresay you would be among the first to hit me with "I waited forty-nine days for* this*?" Or as our next correspondent puts it.....

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave,

Sometimes I wish you were more predictable.

I began reading Cerebus with #13 and quickly managed to scrape up back issues back to #5; the stories were very funny, and just kept getting better and better as you went along and started exploring new paths. In the course of the High Society storyline the quality of your work and the state of my finances made it seem right and reasonable to start buying 2 copies each issue (one to have for me to read and re-read, and one to be able to loan out to friends without worrying excessively how it would be treated). But then after High Society ended and the Countess storyline ended, the strip seemed to go down for me, becoming more art-oriented and less story-oriented -- and fine as the art may have been, I'm a story person rather than an art connoisseur. So I dropped back down to 1 copy -- and promptly you came back with achingly funny issues like the one where Cerebus wakes up married, the one where Cerebus delivers the balcony address to the assembled throng on the true nature of Tarim, and the one where Cerebus blesses the baby. And just as I'm enjoying being back up to 2 copies, you drop back down to the lean issues of the last few months.

Some years back Steve Gerber expressed annoyance at comics fans who act as if the sky has collapsed if a favorite comic has one off-issue. It's a good point; there's bound to be some fluctuation of quality from month to month, especially when a writer/artist takes as many chances on new things as you do, and the world hasn't come to an end (or a comic been ruined beyond redemption) just because an issue here or there doesn't please the reader as much as most of the run.

On the other hand, a lot of the pleasure of comics for me is the anticipation ("Golly-wow, this series is great so far, I can't wait for the next issue!"), so when an eagerly-awaited series doesn't live up to expectations that have built up in the 30-days-or-whatever since the last issue, it can be a major let-down. And then there's the next 30-days-or-whatever wait for the next issue, with anticipation based on the latest issue, so that when an issue is a let-down the real capper is that long period of diminished expectation until next issue comes out.

Obviously we'd all like consistent greatness. (At least I hope it's obvious. I know I don't shell out my money for Cerebus while thinking, "I surely hope Dave Sim falls flat on his face this time and produces a really mediocre issue," and I have a hard time picturing you working diligently on an issue of Cerebus and thinking to

yourself as you finish a story, "Hey! Hey! This issue certainly is garbage -- that'll teach those obnoxious fans a lesson!") A problem is that some of us want not only consistent greatness but also regularly-scheduled dose of that greatness, preferable a very frequent regularly-scheduled dose.

A regular schedule of publication is important to me because of that joy of anticipation. It's harder to look forward to something if you don't know when that something will arrive, and having something not arrive when you're expecting it can (if done too often) dampen rather than whet the enthusiasm.

A monthly Cerebus is great if you feel comfortable doing it and can turn out greatness that way (without producing a great nervous breakdown). But I'd much rather have a regular-but-less-frequent Cerebus that is consistently (or fairly consistently) great, than the current mostly-monthly Cerebus with its wild swings of quality. The key, I think, is what you feel comfortable doing --how often you can turn out Cerebus and enjoy doing it. I'd hate to think I'm having fun based on your misery; and I'd like to think that, because of the sharing process that writing is, I'm going to enjoy an issue much more if you really enjoyed creating it and came away satisfied, because I'll be picking up some of your own joy and satisfaction from the printed pages.
Good wishes,

Orchard Worker
101 E Main #8,
Mechanicsburg, PA., 17055

What a load of hogwash. Am I to use you as an arbiter of "greatness" and "garbage"? I enjoy doing Cerebus, so you can un-furrow your brow about that. The reason I enjoy doing it is because I do it exactly the way I want. Your advocacy of me enjoying doing the book while somehow satisfying your arbitrary standards of "greatness" (or anyone else's for that matter) is contradictory.

★★★★★★★★★★

Dear Dave:
Of course, we're waiting (emphasis not on "of course" but on "we're") -- not for you to finish (heaven forbid!) -- but for you to continue. Three hundred issues sounds great because we know you -- and Cerebus -- are going to be **there**, here, for a long time. You got there yourself so you don't need a fan to say something designed to help you along, but why not: Cerebus (whatever it is) is more than what it is, to you, to us, for you, for us. That's why you gotta keep it alive.

I've read only the publisher's note of #81. I just bought it tonight: stopped at the newstand, saw it -- "Rad! Rad!" -- sat down and admired the cover. Read your note.

So I'm writing for the first time ever because I've been WAITing for 81 and went back and reread all the Cerebus I have (spotty issues since 23, more recent ones). Now I've read your note.

What's it feel like cranking out, knowing other people damn near live for it, sucking up every next issue? "Great stuff, Dave, great stuff".

Man, it's beautiful "stuff". Pencils, inks, and words. Backgrounds, too, Ger. So I've been sucking up Cerebus for a few years, and it's about time I told you that it's epic (not that you didn't realize that). What you are creating is. I bet if feels great "cranking it out" because you're doing this for you. All of us along for the ride realise that. We're damn glad you're letting us along for the ride. So that's what this letter's about: thank you for Cerebus.

Sixty years from now, when we have all moved on (goddess grant) to other forms of communication that are to comics what comics are to painting, they'll talk about this literature, this fine graphic art welded to literature, that is Cerebus. And we're going to be there saying, "Yep." And that'll be a party.

So you didn't need me to say that but I did, so I did.

I've a lot of speculations about Jaka and Sophia and the Church and State storyline -- who and what they came from -- and because I **feel** those (despite their erroneousness), I feel great respect and empathy for what you're doing.

Like a lot of fanatics, I hope to do my own "thing" someday -- if I could just get a little better, more concise, a little something.

Thanks for what you're giving: thanks for the inspiration to DO. Now on to 81.

Greg Baisden
2200A Fourth Street,
San Rafael, CA., 94901

Don't know if the question is rhetorical or not, but it feels wonderful "cranking it out". Unquestionably there is a great satisfaction thinking about the people who "damn near live for" each issue. It's only on those days when the audience seems filled with Conrad Felbers and Orchard Workers screaming "loss of quality" "cheating, cheating" and "this is garbage" that the whole thing seems rather futile.

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CEREBUS 32: 6,7,14,15,16
CEREBUS 33: 4,5,6,12,14,15,16,18
CEREBUS 34: 3,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,19,20
CEREBUS 35: 6,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,17
CEREBUS 37: 3,4,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,17,18
CEREBUS 38: 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12
CEREBUS 39: 9,15,17,19
CEREBUS 40: 1,5,6,11,12,13,14,15,16,17
CEREBUS 41: 6,7,9,11,12,13,15,16,17,18,19
CEREBUS 42: 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,19,20
CEREBUS 43: 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,14,15,16,19,20
CEREBUS 44: 18,20
CEREBUS 46: 4,5,7
CEREBUS 47: 2,3,8,14,17,18,20
CEREBUS 48: 2,5,6,8,10,11,12,20
CEREBUS 49: 1,2,5,10,12,13,14,15,16,17,20
CEREBUS 50: 2,13,18
CEREBUS 51: 7,13,14
CEREBUS 52: 10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20
CEREBUS 53: 1,3,6,7,8,9,11,16
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CEREBUS 56: 1,3,4,11,16
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CEREBUS 58: 1,4,9,11,12,13,14,15,19
CEREBUS 59: 2,3,4,5,8,11,12,13,14,16,17,18,19,20
CEREBUS 60: 2,3,4,5,9,10,15,16,17,18,19,20
CEREBUS 61: 8,9,10,11,15,16,17,18,19,20
CEREBUS 62: 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,9,10,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20
CEREBUS 63: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20
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CEREBUS 65: 1,2,3,4,7,11,14,15
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